

From: "Johnston, Sadhu" <Sadhu.Johnston@vancouver.ca>

To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL" <CCDTMACDL@vancouver.ca>

Date: 1/20/2016 3:41:57 PM

Subject: Request to Staff - RTS 11232 - Urban Design Studio

Attachments: [CMO - Mayor & Council - Urban Design Studio - 19-01-2016.pdf](#)

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo on the role and function of the Urban Design Studio Division in Planning and Development Services.

A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- The Urban Design Division brings together urban design resources across two departments and 4 groups and provides for a leadership role as part of the PDS management team.
- The absorption of the urban design studio within the Urban Design Division has created greater capacity, efficiency and consistency for urban design related work within PDS Planning and Development Services, other City departments who also utilize our resources and working with the public.

Should you have any questions, please email/call Anita Molaro at anita.molaro@vancouver.ca or 604.871.6479.

Regards,
Sadhu

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PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
General Manager's Office

VanRIMS No.: 01-9000-20

MEMORANDUM

January 19, 2016

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, Acting City Manager
Paul Mochrie, Acting Deputy City Manager
Janice MacKenzie, City Clerk
Lynda Graves, Manager, Administration Services, City Manager's Office
Rena Kendall-Craden, Director, Communications
Mike Magee, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Kevin Quinlan, Deputy Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Braeden Caley, Director, Policy and Communications, Mayor's Office
Anita Molaro, Assistant Director of Planning, Urban Design

FROM: Jane Pickering, Acting General Manager, Planning and Development Services

SUBJECT: RTS# 11232: Urban Design Studio

This memo responds to a Council request for information from December 2015 on whether an analysis on the effects of removing the Urban Design Studio from PDS has been conducted, and re-circulates the original memo that established the position of Assistant Director of Planning for Urban Design. Following the appointment of Anita Molaro to the position in April 2013, the Urban Design Division of PDS was formally consolidated in September 2013.

The Urban Design Division brings together urban design resources that had previously been distributed across departments and multiple divisions in order to utilize our staff resources more efficiently. Prior to the creation of the Urban Design Division there were urban design staff within the Urban Design and Development Planning Centre (9), Major Projects Group (1), Urban Design Studio (2), and Development Services (4) for a total of 16 urban design staff across two departments and 4 groups.

The Urban Design Division is responsible for urban design leadership, from policy development through to site specific implementation of Council's policies and guidelines, including the preservation of heritage, provision of high quality public realm and landscapes.



When the new division was structured in 2013 it was comprised of the following structure to recognize the range of expertise of the various work groups as follows:

1. URBAN DEVELOPMENT - 14 urban design staff and 2 graphic staff

This group provides professional urban design and development planning advice consisting of consultation, review, analysis and development of urban design concepts for major and minor developments under discretionary zoning throughout the City. In addition this group also provides urban design and technical expertise into community planning, rezoning applications, large scale site specific planning programs, and a variety of special projects including public realm plans. The work includes project management from the initial enquiry stage through to issuance of a development permit, overseeing input from other staff review groups, advisory groups and other stakeholders and resolving conflicts. This group also leads community workshops and charrettes. The group includes urban designers/development planners (UDDPC), development planners and HRC staff (Enquiry Centre) and urban designers (Major Projects).

2. URBAN PLANNING (URBAN DESIGN STUDIO) - 2 urban design staff

This group provides professional urban design advice for community planning, area planning and citywide programs including public realm plans with an emphasis on place making and creating vibrant and active public realms. This group is also responsible for leading community workshops and charettes.

3. LANDSCAPE - 5 landscape staff

This group provides professional advice in the areas of landscape design and public realm. The group provides landscape expertise in the review of tree permits, rezoning and development applications as well as in the development of landscape policies and guidelines.

4. HERITAGE - 4 planning staff

This group provides professional heritage advice in the area of conservation and management of our heritage resources and includes the administration of the Heritage register and Heritage bank. The group also leads the negotiation, review and analysis of heritage retention proposals as well as the development of heritage policies and guidelines.

The new division enables the City to continue to provide professional and creative urban design advice, but also to facilitate more timely and responsive urban design advice to Council, citizens and the development community. Additional benefits achieved through the consolidation of the urban design, heritage and landscape staff groups builds on the existing shared strengths of creative urban design problem solving but also the technical acumen in exercising the discretionary aspects of the zoning and development by-laws, Council's policies and guidelines.

Subsequent to the formation of the Urban Design Division in 2013, it was recognized that the work being done by the staff in the Urban Design Studio is the same work being done by the Urban Development staff, and as such, there was no need to make a distinction between these two resource groups within the Urban Design Division. In December of 2015, the Urban Design Studio was removed as a subset within the Urban Design Division and these 2 positions are now part of the larger Urban Development group. Productivity of these resources continues to grow as part of the larger complement of staff.

Furthermore, since 2013, there have been more staff resources provided to the Urban Design Division, particularly in the Urban Development and Landscape areas for a total staff complement of 34 staff.

1. URBAN DEVELOPMENT - 19 urban design staff and 3 graphic staff
2. LANDSCAPE - 10 landscape staff
3. HERITAGE STAFF - 4 heritage planners

I hope this information clarifies the role and function of the Urban Design Division and that the absorption of the Urban Design Studio within the division has resulted in many benefits including more timely and responsive urban design advice to Council, citizens and the development community and provides all the necessary skills to deliver the city's urban design needs.

If you have further questions, please contact me or Anita Molaro at 604-871-6479.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Pickering". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Jane Pickering
Acting General Manager, Planning and Development Services

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